

The Army of the South-West and the First Campaign in Arkansas. Chapter Eleventh.

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ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

The Annals of Iowa, 6(3) (Jul. 1868): 141-160

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ANNALS OF IOWA.

VOL. VI.

IOWA CITY, JULY, 1868.

No. III.

THE ARMY OF THE SOUTH-WEST, AND THE FIRST CAMPAIGN IN ARKANSAS.

BY SAM'L PRENTIS CURTIS,

BREVET CAPTAIN AND AID-DE-CAMP TO MAJOR GENERAL CURTIS.

(Continued from page 84.)

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

VAN DORN—THE BATTLEFIELD—SUMMARY—FALSE ALARM—
OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE—INCIDENTS—WHO WON THE
BATTLE—SIGEL'S ADDRESS—PROMOTIONS.

The report of Van Dorn must be received with due allowance for its exaggerations, misrepresentations and perversions of the truth. Earl Van Dorn, the licentious and unprincipled traitor, the defeated General, desired, by adroit omission, misrepresentation and direct falsehood, as much as possible, and in accordance with the common practice of the rebel leaders, to cover his defeat and prevent the South from learning the discouraging news and full particulars of its loss. Common report among the enemy has assigned the burden of defeat at Elkhorn to the bad generalship of Van Dorn.

He admits his force to have been 16,000, and afterwards claims that less than 14,000 went into action. These statements are totally unreliable; the rolls of the enemy, captured after the battle, revealed a force of 37,000, and a note to the rolls estimated that the irregular troops and bands of fugitives increased the number to 41,000. So confident was the enemy of success that he had stationed a cavalry force 3,000 strong, several miles south of the Union position, for the purpose of

cutting off retreat in that direction. Van Dorn, by his own showing, attempted the remarkable performance of surrounding on all sides and cutting off the retreat of a force nearly double his own in numbers. He had the reputation of a skilled General. It is not likely that he would have hazarded such an undertaking with a force so inferior to his enemy. In making the perilous experiment of guarding an enemy's front and at the same time attacking him with a divided force at widely different points, in the flank and in the rear, he must have relied on vast superiority in numbers; but in this he most signally failed. His loss, in killed, wounded and missing, could not have been less, and was, very probably, greater than our own, although, evasively, he acknowledges but 800. The rebel dead left on the battle-field, in numbers, far surpassed the national loss.

His assertion of the capture of four cannon is simply false. All the Federal guns captured by the enemy were subsequently, during the battle, retaken. His ridiculous over-estimation of the Federal force and losses is sufficiently manifest from other and reliable official records. His statement that on the 7th, "at sunset, the enemy was flying before our victorious troops at every point in the front," correctly interpreted, means that the Union army fell back at but one point, in good order, for ammunition and a better position, as his "withdrawal" on the succeeding day signifies a defeat and a retreat. He fails to give any intelligent description of McCulloch's battle near Leetown, and the death of McCulloch and McIntosh, and capture of Col. Hebert, the commanders in that quarter, have prevented any reliable rebel report of that action from being made. The following extracts from a letter from an officer in Price's army, present at the battle, published in the rebel "Richmond Whig" of April 9th, 1862, will refute some of the statements of Van Dorn:

* * * * *

"When the army left Cove Creek, which is south of Boston Mountain, Generals Price, McCulloch, Pike and McIntosh seemed to think—at least camp-talk amongst officers high in command so represented—that our united forces would carry into action nearly thirty thousand men, more frequently estimated at thirty-

five thousand than a lower figure. I believe General Van Dorn was confident that not a man less than twenty-five thousand were panting to follow his victorious plume to a field where prouder honors awaited than any he had yet gathered. Besides this, he under-estimated the number of our foes. In no case did our estimate reach seventy-five per cent. of their actual number.(!) It was believed that Curtis left Rolla with not more than fifteen or sixteen thousand men. A part, of course, would be left as they came along to hold Springfield and other points. I am certain the enemy have more accurate information in regard to us than we of them; and besides this, caution accompanies superior discipline.

"Well, out we marched, with music and banners, thinking we had thirty-five thousand men 'eager for the fray,' besides teamsters and camp-followers. The army went without tents, carrying a blanket each, with three days' rations. Long and energetically did the poor fellows trudge on through mud and snow, until twenty-five miles were measured the first day. The second day discovered no abatement in their zeal, and the third morning confronted them with Sigel's forces in the environs of Bentonville." * * * * *

The scenes after the fight were terrible. The field for miles was strewn with dead and wounded Union and rebel soldiers. During the previous day the dry leaves scattered over the ground, had been fired, adding to the smoke, flame and confusion of battle; the fire had spread in various directions, through the woods, burning and blackening the dead, and horribly torturing the wounded. Many, no doubt, perished in the flames before assistance could reach them. On the cliffs of Elkhorn lay many wounded rebels, helpless and suffering in the bushes; here one with a wound in the bowels, imploring every passer-by to put an end to his agony; there another, pale in rapidly approaching death, with an entire leg torn away by a cannon ball and the ragged, bloody stump dabbled in the dirt, yet, calmly smiling and thanking his late Union foe for the swallow of lukewarm water from the broken canteen picked up on the field of battle; here a corpse, with the head as neatly removed by a cannon ball as if done by the guillotine; there a shattered, ghastly arm, grasping a bent and broken flint-lock; everywhere scattered blankets and home-made quilts and coverlets, and in the woods below and beyond, muskets, arms, and dead and wounded rebels in the common costume of the country, home-spun "butternut," or the coarse, gray uniform of the Confederate soldiers. Many were partly clad in Federal uniform torn from our dead and

wounded in battle. The latter were generally found partially stripped, especially in the matter of shoes and stockings, of which articles the rebels stood in great need.

The buildings composing "Elkhorn Tavern" had first been used as a Union commissary store-house and hospital. When Carr fell back, on the 7th, the rebels occupied them, capturing the stores, a mail and the wounded Union soldiers. Upon regaining this ground it was found that the enemy had made the best possible use of his brief possession; he had consumed everything available in the subsistence department, with the exception of the desiccated vegetables, used for making soup. These were left untouched, their use not being understood. The mail had been opened and its contents scattered to the winds. Elkhorn Tavern building was loaded with the dead of both armies, piled up like cord wood on the porch, and the house was full of the wounded and dying; here were found wounded men who had been given up as dead by their comrades.

Where the fight had raged, in the centre, beyond Leetown, the dead were to be found scattered in every direction through the thick brush and in the fields towards Bentonville. They had lain unburied for two days; the rain had descended and washed white their exposed flesh, and many were partially devoured by hogs. Here too, were everywhere found guns, cartridge boxes, bayonets, &c., with solid shot, and shell exploded and unexploded, and all the general *debris* of battle. In the long lane where had occurred the cavalry fight of Bussey's command with the Texas rangers, the Union and rebel dead were thickly scattered. Here were to be found huge home-made bowie-knives of the rangers; here, also, lay unburied, many of Pike's Indians.

For miles in every direction, every house was converted into a hospital. The red hospital flag, often an old handkerchief or fragment of rustic female dress, waved over tenements that at any other time would only have been used as stables or outbuildings. Leetown, a hamlet of a dozen houses, was completely filled with the wounded; rebel surgeons, under a flag

of truce, took such care as they were able of their own wounded, who were removed as rapidly as possible to Fayetteville, while the Union wounded were sent to Cassville.

The battle of Pea Ridge and its general and immediate effects, may be briefly stated as follows: An army of 10,000 national soldiers, after a long and toilsome march of some 250 miles; over a rough, wild and semi-hostile country, in the coldest season of the year, in a three days hard contested fight, had defeated a rebel army of probably four times their number, and driven them from the field, with a Union loss, in killed, wounded and missing, not exceeding 1,400 men, being nearly 14 per cent. of the whole force engaged. The rebel loss must have been considerably greater, although it is impossible to form any correct estimate. They lost a large amount of arms, ammunition and other property. The hardest fighting was undoubtedly done by the 3d and 4th divisions, and of these the 4th division, the longest of any under fire, composed principally of Iowa and Illinois troops, behaved with the greater gallantry, and suffered the severer loss, being about 28 per cent. of the men in action.

No serious failure occurred to the national forces during the whole engagement, the nearest approach being the discomfiture of the cavalry, near Leetown, in a broken and bushy locality, where cavalry could be of but little use. Some corps jealousy and personal ill-feeling was manifested among officers in consequence, but the several detachments there exposed and cut up, were not defeated or driven from the field, and subsequently behaved most gallantly, especially the 3d Iowa cavalry, whose loss was over 21 per cent. of their whole force in the field.

The consequent effect of the battle of Pea Ridge, followed shortly by the evacuation of New Madrid, and surrender of Island Ten, was the termination of the rebellion in Missouri, as a belligerent power. Secession was forever killed. No rebel army was ever after able to maintain an abiding foothold in the State. Raids and brief invasions were uniformly and promptly driven back. Scattered bands of guerrillas and

bushwhackers gave trouble, and a few counties bordering on Arkansas stood as a sort of neutral ground, but with the defeat at Pea Ridge, the Confederacy lost its real hold on the State, and Missouri, restored to the Union, threw off the incubus of slavery, the cause of the war.

This first great national victory in the south-west, for the time paralyzed the rebellion on the west bank of the Mississippi. The rebel armies that had fought the battle were compelled to take refuge east of the river, and had it, at the time, been possible to advance on Little Rock, defenseless Arkansas must then have yielded to the Union arms.

Immediately after the retreat of the enemy, Van Dorn sent a request to be permitted to bury his dead. The request was granted, and on the morning of the 9th a party of rebel cavalry, Capt. Schaumberg's company of Little's regiment of Missouri rebels, was seen approaching the Union lines from the direction of Bentonville. They were without a flag of truce, and were well armed. Stragglers who were wandering over the late battle field reported the return of the entire rebel army, and the whole camp was aroused. McKenny, Curtis' aid-de-camp, was near, and knowing that this must be the burial party, rode up to them and advised them to show a white flag, which they did. But in perhaps five minutes the alarm had spread from one end of the Union camp to the other. Sigel's batteries fired over the trees in the direction of the supposed invasion, and it was perhaps fifteen or twenty minutes before quiet was restored.

In replying to Van Dorn's request to be permitted to bury his dead, Curtis censured the atrocities committed by the rebel Indians. The correspondence on the subject is here given:

HEADQUARTERS, TRANS-MISSISSIPPI DISTRICT, }
March 9, 1862. }

To the Commanding Officer of the U. S. forces, Sugar Creek, Arkansas:

Sir—In accordance with the usages of war, I have the honor to request that you will permit the burial party, whom I send from this army with a flag of truce, to attend to the duty of collecting and interring the bodies of the officers and men who fell during the engagement of the 7th and 8th inst.

Very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

EARL VAN DORN,
Major-General commanding army.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE S. W., }
PEA RIDGE, March 9, 1862. }

EARL VAN DORN, commanding Confederate forces:

Sir—The General commanding is in receipt of yours of the 9th, saying that in accordance with the usages of war you send a party to collect and bury the dead. I am directed to say, all possible facilities will be given for burying the dead, many of which have already been interred. Quite a number of your surgeons have fallen into our hands, and are permitted to act under parole, and under a General Order from Major-General Halleck, further liberty will be allowed them, if such accommodations be reciprocated by you.

The General regrets that we find on the battle-field, contrary to civilized warfare, many of the Federal dead who were tomahawked, scalped and their bodies shamefully mangled, and expresses a hope that this important struggle may not degenerate to a savage warfare.

By order of Brigadier-General Curtis.

T. I. McKENNY,
Acting Ass't Adj't Gen'l.

HEADQUARTERS TRANS-MISSISSIPPI DISTRICT, }
VAN BUREN, ARK., March 14, 1862. }

GENERAL—I am instructed by Major-General Van Dorn, commanding this District, to express to you his thanks and gratification on account of the courtesy extended by yourself and the officers under your command to the burial party sent by him to your camp on the 9th inst.

He is pained to learn by your letter, brought to him by the commanding officer of the party, that the remains of some of your soldiers have been reported to you to have been scalped, tomahawked and otherwise mutilated.

He hopes you have been misinformed with regard to this matter; the Indians who formed part of his forces having for many years been regarded as civilized people. He will, however, most cordially unite with you in repressing the horrors of this unnatural war—and that you may co-operate with him to this end more effectually, he desires me to inform you that many of our men who surrendered themselves prisoners of war were reported to him as having been murdered in cold blood by their captors, who were alleged to be Germans. The General commanding feels sure that you will do your part, as he will, in preventing such atrocities in future, and that the perpetrators of them will be brought to justice, whether German or Choctaw.

The privileges which you extend to our medical officers will be reciprocated; and as soon as possible means will be taken for an exchange of prisoners.

I am, sir, very respectfully yours,

DABNEY H. MAURY, A. A. G.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE SOUTH-WEST, }
CAMP AT CROSS TIMBERS, March 21, 1862. }

CAPTAIN—I am in receipt of yours of the 14th inst., expressing the reasonable regret of your commanding General for the barbarities committed by Indians at the recent battle of Pea Ridge. The fact of many bodies having been scalped

and mutilated was patent, and the General commanding this army wishes, for the sake of humanity, that the testimony was not incontestable.

In reply to your information that "men who surrendered themselves prisoners of war were reported to the General as having been murdered in cold blood by their captors, who were alleged to be Germans," I may say the Germans charge the same against your soldiers. I enclose copy of a letter from General Sigel, addressed to me before the receipt of yours, in which this subject is referred to. As "dead men tell no tales," it is not easy to see how these charges may be proven, and the General hopes they are mere "camp stories," having little or no foundation. The Germans in the army have taken and turned over many prisoners, and the General has not before heard of any murder charged against them. On the contrary, they have seemed peculiarly anxious to exhibit the number of their captives as evidence of their valor.

Any act of cruelty to prisoners, or those offering to deliver themselves as such, on the part of the soldiers of this army, coming to the knowledge of the General commanding, will be punished with extreme penalty of military law.

Exceptions may undoubtedly occur, as we have murderers in all communities; but the employment of Indians involves a probability of savage ferocity which is not to be regarded as the exception, but the rule. Bloody conflicts seem to inspire their ancient barbarities, nor can we expect civilized warfare from savage foes. If any presumption has been raised in their favor on the score of civilization, it has certainly been demolished by the use of the tomahawk, war-club and scalping-knife at Pea Ridge.

I may here state, that the General commanding directed a surgeon of one of the Indian regiments, taken at the battle, to be sent to St. Louis, a close prisoner, while other surgeons are allowed, on parole, the freedom of our camp.

Believing the General commanding the opposing army is equally anxious to suppress atrocities which are too often evinced by our species, the General commanding this army hopes Indians will hereafter be excluded from your force.

I am, Captain, very respectfully yours,

H. Z. CURTIS,
A. A. General.

HEADQUARTERS 1ST AND 2D DIVISIONS, }
CAMP HOFFMAN, MO., March 20, 1862. }

GENERAL—I beg leave to direct your attention to an information which was received yesterday at Keetsville by some of the wounded soldiers of the Flying Battery.

While Capt. Elbert's three pieces were taken by the enemy and our men serving the guns, surrendered, they were shot dead by the rebels, although seeking refuge behind the horses.

When such acts are committed, it is very natural that our soldiers will seek revenge, if no satisfaction is given by the commander of the Confederate army.

Very respectfully your obd't serv't,

F. SIGEL,
Brig. Gen. Comd'g 1 and 2 Div.

To Brig. Gen. CURTIS, Comd'g Army of the S. W.

HEADQUARTERS DEPT. OF INDIAN TERRITORY, }
CANTONMENT DAVIS, 23d March, 1862. }

The enclosed copy of orders is forwarded to Major-General Curtis, to the end that he may know that the enormities censured and forbidden by it are not likely to be repeated, and are regarded with horror by the Confederate commanders.

And having learned from a letter found on the field, that those who burned private dwellings at Bentonville had been ordered to be tried by court martial, the undersigned informs Major-General Curtis, that a general court-martial has been ordered to try a white man, who shot one of the wounded in the action of the 7th inst., the man so shot being prostrate on the ground and unable to offer resistance.

The undersigned avails himself of this occasion to offer Major-General Curtis, assurances of his high consideration and esteem.

ALBERT PIKE,
Brig. Gen. Prov. Army C. S. A. Comd'g
Department of Indian Territory.

HEADQUARTERS DEPT. IND. TERRITORY, }
DWIGHT MISSION, CHER. NATION, 15th March, 1862. }

Special Orders, No. —

I. The commanding General with great regret makes known to the troops of the Department, that in the action of Friday, the 7th of March, he saw with horror a person unknown to him, and who immediately passed beyond his sight, shoot a wounded enemy, prostrate upon the ground and begging for mercy. No degree of bravery can atone for such an atrocious act of barbarous and wanton cruelty. Exclaimed against by all who witnessed it, its odium ought not to attach to the troops under his command, but only to the perpetrator. Often as such acts of inhumanity have been done by the enemy, the Indian troops are implored in no case hereafter to follow their cruel example, since the bravest should be always the most ready to spare a fallen foe.

II. The commanding General has also learned with the utmost pain and regret, that one, at least, of the enemy's dead, was found scalped upon the field. That practice excites horror, leads to cruel retaliation, and would expose the Confederate States to the just reprehension of all civilized nations. If the Indian allies of the Northern States continue it, let retaliation in kind be used to them alone, and those who with them may invade the Indian country and sanction it. Against forces that do not practice it, it is peremptorily forbidden during the present war.

III. Commanders of regiments, battalions and companies of Indian troops in the Confederate service will cause the foregoing orders to be read and interpreted to their respective commands, and will use all possible means to prevent the perpetration of the acts censured hereby.

By order of Brig. Gen. Albert Pike.

FAYETTE HEWITT,
Capt and A. A. General.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE SOUTH-WEST, }
CROSS TIMBERS, March 29th, 1862. }

GENERAL—Yours of the 23d, expressing your abhorrence at certain instances of cruelty on the battle-field of Pea Ridge, is duly received and fully appreciated.

The matter has already been a subject of correspondence with General Van Dorn. I cannot expect Indian regiments to practice civilized warfare, and I regret to see a resort to such belligerent elements in this unfortunate war.

The imputation in your order of cruelty to prisoners and the use of savage "allies" on the part of the United States, is entirely gratuitous, and looks much like an apology or excuse for what your letter and conscience so strictly condemn.

I avail myself, General, of this occasion to assure you I reciprocate the personal regard expressed by you. I would prefer that we were friends rather than foes, as I am

Very respectfully yours,

S. R. CURTIS,
Major-General Commanding.

A few of the many incidents of battle are here selected as being authentic and worthy of remembrance.

Sergeant-Major Wooster, of the 3d Iowa Cavalry, was killed by a cannon shot, near Elkhorn Tavern. He had volunteered to go ahead and untangle the horses of the Dubuque Battery, under a plunging fire from the rebel artillery, and while so engaged the ball carried away the side of his skull. When struck he called to his son, "Johnny, oh, Johnny, I must go," and expired.

A six pound ball, in the fight near Leetown, killed two cousins named Alley, and lodged in the breast of Lieut. Perry Watts, of Company "K," 22d Indiana Infantry, from whence it was extracted.

In the battle of the 8th, a rebel was impaled to the earth by a splinter six feet long struck from a tree by a cannon shot. Many trees were partly broken or entirely shivered by the artillery fire.

Lieutenant Henne, of Company "F," 12th Missouri Infantry, lost his right leg by a cannon ball. He had previously lost his left arm in the wars of Hungary. When carried from the field, in passing General Curtis, this heroic officer, forgetful of suffering, and with a smiling face, waved his hand to the General in that triumphant enthusiasm which won the battle.

Captain Stark, of Curtis' staff, relates that a woodcock, flying from the direction of the rebel army, fell dead to the earth near General Curtis, killed by a stray bullet.

The rebel Indians were of little avail as soldiers, principally confining their operations to rifling the dead and scalping the wounded. On being confronted with the Union artillery they would exclaim, "Ugh! big gun!" and retreat to the brush. A rebel surgeon states that on the morning of the battle he observed about three hundred of them daubing their faces black with charcoal. A chief informed him that "the Indians, when going into a fight, painted their faces red; but when suffering from hunger they color black." They had been without food for two days.

Ben. McCulloch was killed in the action of the 7th, in front of Leetown, on a slight elevation on the opposite side of the field from the Union lines. He was shot by Peter Pelican, a private of Company "B," 36th Illinois Infantry. Pelican was acting as a skirmisher, when he saw McCulloch ride up and part the bushes before him to observe the field. Pelican fired, and McCulloch fell. It is said that Pelican took from the person of McCulloch a gold watch, which was afterwards given to Colonel Greusel, the approach of the rebels preventing the capture of the fallen General's pistols. This statement is doubtful, as is also a tale that McCulloch, when informed that he must die, turned incredulously away, and with the remark, "Oh, hell!" expired. McCulloch wore a dress of black velvet, patent leather high-topped boots and a light-colored, broad-brimmed Texan hat. He rode a light bay horse.

The field glass of General Price was captured and used during the remainder of the action by Col. Jeff. C. Davis.

A cannon shot ricocheted under the horse of Colonel White and carried away a leg of the horse of Lieutenant Landgrove. The Lieutenant fell with his horse, but extricated himself. The horse regained its feet and hobbled off to the rebel lines, taking with it all the Lieutenant's available funds, which were concealed in the holsters.

A German Union soldier rode directly into the rebel lines with a caisson. To the question of a rebel officer, "Where are you going?" he replied, "Dis for Sigel!" He was properly cared for by the enemy.

Samuel M. Martin, a musician of the 18th Indiana Infantry, while assisting in carrying a wounded comrade from the field, was himself shot by a minie ball, which striking the miniature of his lady love, was deflected from the breast, and passing around the ribs, lodged in the back, thus saving his life. The case of the picture was indented by the bullet, and the glass was shattered, but the picture was uninjured.

When Colonel Dodge was forced back, he left Charles Baker, a hospital nurse, at a secluded house filled with Union wounded. The rebels discovered Baker observing their motions from behind a chimney. He was taken prisoner, placed in the front rank and marched towards the Union lines, fully exposed to their fire. The enemy was compelled to retreat, when Baker made his escape to the brush, but he was soon retaken and confronted with Price. The latter desired to know who was that man in a black coat who commanded the Federals opposed to him. When told that it was Colonel Dodge, of the 4th Iowa Infantry, he said, "Give my compliments to him and say to him that he has given me the best fight I ever witnessed."

The enemy fired wagon nuts, pieces of chain, gravel and various other kinds of projectiles. The overcoat worn by Colonel Dodge was riddled by these unusual missiles.

Two soldiers, belonging respectively to the 35th Illinois Infantry and the 4th Iowa Infantry, were wounded and lying on the battle-field. A rebel approached them and endeavored to take the Illinois soldier's watch. Both soldiers protested against such treatment to a wounded enemy. The rebel was, however, remorseless, and striking the Union soldier dead, took the watch and went away.

Captain Davis, of the 3d Illinois Cavalry, had one of the legs of his horse shot away, after which the animal ran away three quarters of a mile, on three legs, and with the Captain still mounted.

A German soldier of the 35th Illinois met with two singular and narrow escapes near the Elkhorn Tavern. He wore ear-rings, and a bullet cut one of them in two and passed into the shoulder of his Second Lieutenant, the broken fragments of the ring still remaining in the ear. Ten minutes later, during a lull in the fight, and while the soldier was relating his escape, a stray musket ball carried away the other ear-ring, slightly injuring the skin of the ear.

A Texan charged bayonet on a Lieutenant of the 9th Iowa Infantry whose sword was broken. The officer avoided the rebel's thrust, fell at his feet, caught him by the legs and threw him heavily to the earth, then before he could rise, drew from his adversary's belt a long knife and plunged it in Texan's bosom. The latter, with dying grasp, seized the Lieutenant's hair so firmly that it had to be cut to effect a release.

While Osterhaus was engaging the enemy in the centre, a Sergeant of the 12th Missouri Infantry handed to his Captain his wife's picture, and asked him to send it to her in St. Louis, with his dying declaration that he thought of her in his last moments. "You are not wounded, are you?" asked the Captain. "No," was the reply; "I know I shall be killed to-day. I have been in battle before, but I have never felt as I do now. A moment ago I became convinced that my time had come, but how, I cannot tell. Will you gratify my request? Remember, I speak to you as a dying man." The Captain complied, but told the Sergeant that he would live to a good old age. "You will see," was the response. The Sergeant entered the fight, and the Captain saw him no more. At night he appeared not at the camp fire. Three hours before he had been killed by a grape shot.

On Saturday, while Sigel was driving the enemy from the heights of Elkhorn, one rebel officer, a Captain of a Louisiana company, seemed crazed with desperate valor. Instead of retreating with his comrades, he advanced towards our troops until almost alone. Waving his sword, he called in a loud, clear voice for his men to follow him, and denounced as

cowards all who retreated. They heeded not his appeals, and finding himself deserted he ran towards our advance, shouting something which was understood to be, "I am as brave as Cæsar. If we are whipped I do not want to live. Come on, you d——d Yankees!" The national soldiers, with a generous admiration for useless and misguided courage, sought to take him prisoner; but a Union battery opened fire from the left on the retreating foe, and in its relentless storm swept down the one brave heart which so full of fierce life and unavailing determination, poured out its crimson tide on the cold and trampled earth.

After the battle, inquiries were made of the Louisiana prisoners, but none could tell his name. They believed he was the son of a sugar planter living on the Bayou La Fourche, who had joined the Southern army seeking death. It was the old tale of disappointed love. If not killed, he had determined to become a suicide.

At the commencement of the engagement on the 7th, General Curtis, his staff and body guard, Knox and Fayel, correspondents, respectively, of the New York Herald and Missouri Democrat, Judge Isaac Murphy, afterwards Governor of Arkansas, a scout, the writer, and a number of others, were clustered on a little knoll near headquarters. The roar of musketry and artillery sounded loudly from Lee-town and Elkhorn Tavern. Some one asked what would be the name of the battle. One suggested Sugar Creek, but it was said that a fight on nearly the same ground, but a few weeks before, had already received that name. Another suggested the "battle of the Ozark Mountains," but it was objected that this described no particular locality and covered a vast territory. "Whatever you call it," said the scout, "the people here will call it the battle of Pea Ridge, for that is the name by which this ridge is known all through this country." "Better call it Pea Ridge then," said Curtis, and thus a name was made in history. The rebels have uniformly given the battle the more musical name of "Elkhorn," from the tavern where Carr struggled so gloriously on the 7th, and

where the battle terminated on the 8th. It is noticeable that a locality called Pea Ridge, hundreds of miles distant, near Corinth, Mississippi, soon afterwards became a point prominent for military operations, and for a time seemed likely to duplicate the battle name.

Halleck had repeatedly promised reinforcements before the battle. Hunter, with five thousand men, he said, was advancing on our right from Kansas. During the gloom and despondency of the 7th, the wildest rumors prevailed among the troops. Jim Lane, with a large army, was advancing by forced march to our assistance. The 13th Illinois Infantry, under Wyman, was moving in double-quick march from Cassville to the field. But all these rumors were without foundation, and the little army was left to work out its own salvation without reinforcements.

Unscrupulous partisans sought to give to Sigel the honors of the fight. The German papers of St. Louis asserted that Curtis, disheartened by the conflict, first proposed to surrender, and finally tendered the command to the former; that Sigel accepted, and led the troops to victory. These tales were repeated far and wide, and gained quite a general credence. German officers in the army aided in their circulation. Colonel Vandever heard these tales, and addressed a letter to General Curtis on the subject. Curtis referred the letter to Sigel. The latter, with the true spirit of a gentleman and a soldier, denied these assertions and denounced their authors. He addressed a letter to the commanding General, of which a copy is here inserted. Halleck also attracted the attention of Curtis to these tales and rumors. In reply, a copy of Sigel's letter of denial was forwarded to Department headquarters, in St. Louis, and placed on file among the official records. A member of Halleck's staff at once caused the letter to be published in the St. Louis press:

HEADQUARTERS 1ST AND 2D DIVISIONS, }
KEETSEVILLE, MO., March 27, 1862. }

GENERAL—It is with great displeasure that I have read the letter of Col. Vandever to Capt. Curtis, your Ass't Adj't General, and I will do all in my power to find out the author of an assertion which is, as far I know, untrue.

You did never give the command of the army to me, and I regard it as a calumny, if it is said that you spoke in my presence about surrendering.

This I declare on my honor, and hope that the officers and soldiers of this army will do what they can to preserve the mutual good feeling and the good understanding amongst us, instead of creating animosities by forwardness and misrepresentations.

I am, General, with the greatest respect, yours truly,

F. SIGEL, Maj. Gen.

Major-General CURTIS, comd'g Army of the S. W.

There is a common engraving representing General Sigel at Pea Ridge, charging with drawn sword through smoke, blood and flames, mowing down fierce and venomous looking rebels, and followed by the Union army, himself the only General visible. This picture portrays a popular idea of the battle of Pea Ridge, and one which has been followed by superficial historians of the war. It illustrates the utter absurdity of many popular impressions. Generals seldom so conduct themselves in action, and Sigel did nothing of the kind. His previous glorious record in the South-West had rendered him prominent as the then principal German General of the war, and his admirers stood ready to award him all the laurels of the campaign. An impartial reading of his own and other official reports, will best enable an intelligent reader to determine to whom belongs the glory of this battle. Sigel did well, but there were others whose positions enabled them to do better. The entire loss of his command at Pea Ridge was 263, and of the troops not under his command, 1,088. "This sad reckoning shows where the long continued fire was bourne, and where the public sympathies should be most directed." His retreat, with only six hundred of his command, from Bentonville to Pea Ridge, on the 6th, was his most brilliant performance during the battle, and was conducted with a skill and gallantry seldom if ever surpassed. It is, however, difficult to perceive any good reason for his losing two hours, and being surprised by the enemy at Bentonville after the departure of most of his command.

Curtis was indeed the commander who won the battle. During the entire action he preserved the utmost coolness

and self-possession, and never for a moment seemed doubtful of success. The gallant Carr, when driven back from Elkhorn, seemed almost disheartened, and implored for reinforcements, which could not then be given, and it was when the battle appeared almost lost in that quarter where it had raged most fiercely, that Curtis appeared fresh from victory near Leetown, and ordered the retreating troops to an about-face and charge, which regained their lost position.

Despondency was in the hearts of many officers. At midnight before the last day's fighting, which resulted in our complete victory, General Asboth sent the following letter, hastily written in pencil, to General Curtis. It illustrates the dangers apprehended by one of our most gallant officers in the darkest hour of battle:

HEADQUARTERS 2D DIVISION, }
CAMP NEAR SUGAR CREEK, March 8th, 1862. }

GEN'L SAM'L R. CURTIS, commanding S. W. Army:

GENERAL—As General Sigel, under whose command you have placed me with my division, has not yet returned to our camp, I beg to address you, General, directly, reporting that all the troops of the 2d division were yesterday, as well as now in the night, entirely without forage, and as we are cut off from all supplies by the enemy outnumbering our forces several times, and as one day more without forage will make our horses unserviceable, consequently the cavalry and artillery, as well as the teams, of no use at all.

I would respectfully solicit a decided concentrated movement, with the view of cutting our way through the enemy, when you may deem it most advisable, and save by this, if not the whole, at least the larger part of our surrounded army.

I take the opportunity of mentioning the high valor of the 2d Mo. Vols. and 2d Ohio Battery, which, supported by the 1st Iowa Battery, did save, this afternoon, at a very critical time, our camp from the advancing enemy. Officers and men all did their duty gallantly, pressing the enemy until evening, when the last cartridge and artillery ammunition was exhausted.

I have especially to mention the gallant conduct of Col. Schaffer, Lt. Col. Laibold and Lt. Chapman, who was wounded in a manner which will deprive the army of his services for some time.

Finally, I have to communicate the gratifying news that the three pieces of the 1st Flying Battery detailed this morning from my division to General Osterhaus, and supposed to have been taken by the enemy, have been brought in by Col. Pattison, and that the two batteries will be able to resume the fight at day-break.

I am, General, very respectfully your ob't serv't,

ASBOTH,
Brig. Gen. Comd'g 2d D.

Immediately after the battle, Sigel marched his two divisions north, in pursuit of the enemy, to Keetsville, in Missouri. On the road he sent the following note to Curtis:

HEADQUARTERS, 13 MILES FROM KEETSVILLE, }
March 9th, 1862. }

GENERAL—We are at and beyond the fork of the road going to Bentonville. It seems that the enemy's main force retreats towards Keetsville. Let us follow him through and get out of this hollow. The trains may follow and take our prisoners, sick and the arms we have taken along—also the munition wagons, etc., from the enemy. Let us do this, because Van Dorn may recover and make a stand, whilst we now can drive him before us and take a more convenient position at Keetsville.

With the greatest respect, your ob't servant,

F. SIGEL, B. Gen.

But this movement had much the appearance of a retreat. It divided our forces, and it was of importance that we should retain possession of the battle-field, the apparent evidence of our victory, and as long as possible maintain an advanced position in the enemy's country. Sigel was at once ordered to return with his command to the battle-field. His retrograde movement was disapproved alike by Halleck and Curtis, and he returned and camped at Pea Ridge.

Within a few weeks after the battle, Sigel, worn down by the fatigues of the campaign, was, at Cross Timbers, taken sick, and obtained leave of absence to go to St. Louis. He never returned to the army of the South-West. When he recovered his health the army had reached Batesville. He had earnestly desired to be notified if there was any occasion for his services, and telegraphed for orders to return. But there were more general officers than men for them to command. The return of Sigel would have embarrassed the entire army organization. He was therefore transferred to a command in Virginia, higher and of greater importance than any he had previously held. A short time before his departure, and among his last official acts in the South-West, he issued the following eloquent address to the soldiers of the 1st and 2d Divisions:

HEADQUARTERS 1ST AND 2D DIVISIONS, }
CAMP PEA RIDGE, ARK., March 15, 1862. }

To the officers and soldiers of the 1st and 2d Divisions:

After so many hardships and sufferings of this war in the West, a great and decisive victory has, for the first time, been attained, and the army of the enemy overwhelmed and perfectly routed. The rebellious flag of the Confederate States lies in the dust, and the same men who had organized armed rebellion at Camp Jackson, Maysville and Fayetteville, who had fought against us at Boonville, Carthage and Wilson's Creek, at Lexington and Milford, have paid the penalty of their seditious work with their lives, or are seeking refuge behind the Boston Mountains and the shores of the Arkansas River.

The last days were hard, but triumphant. Surrounded and pressed upon all sides by an enterprising, desperate and greedy enemy—by the Missouri and Arkansas mountaineer, the Texan Ranger, the finest regiment of Louisiana troops, and even the savage Indian—almost without food, sleep or camp fires, you remained firm and unabashed, awaiting the moment when you could drive back your assailants or break through the iron circle by which the enemy thought to crush or capture us all, and plant the rebellious flag on the rocky summit of Pea Ridge.

You have defeated all their schemes. When at McKreisick's farm, west of Bentonville, you extricated yourselves from their grasp by a night's march, and secured a train of two hundred wagons before the enemy became aware of the direction you had taken, instead of being cut off, weakened and driven to the necessity of giving battle under the most unfavorable circumstance, you joined your friends and comrades at Sugar Creek, and thereby saved yourselves and the whole army from being separated and beaten in detail.

On the retreat from Benton to Sugar Creek—a distance of ten miles—you cut your way through an enemy at least five times stronger than yourselves. The activity, self-possession and courage of the little band of six hundred, will ever be memorable in the history of this war.

When on the next day the great battle began, under the command of General Asboth, you assisted the fourth division with all the cheerfulness and alacrity of good and faithful soldiers—that division on that day holding the most important position—whilst Colonel Osterhaus, co-operating with the third division, battered down the hosts of McCulloch on our left, and Major Poten guarded our rear.

On the 8th, you came at the right time to the right place. It was the first opportunity you had of showing your full strength and power. In less than three hours you formed in line of battle, advanced and co-operated with our friends on the right, and routed the enemy so completely that he fled like dust before a hurricane. And so it will always be when traitors, seduced by selfish leaders and persecuted by the pangs of an evil conscience, are fighting against soldiers who defend a good cause, are well-drilled and disciplined, obey promptly the orders of their officers, and do not shrink from dangerous assault when at the proper and decisive moment it is necessary.

You may look with pride on the few days just passed, during which you have so gloriously defended the flag of the Union. From 2 o'clock on the morning

of the 6th, when you left McKreisick's farm, until 4 o'clock in the afternoon of the 9th, when you arrived from Keetsville in the common encampment, you marched fifty miles, fought three battles, took not only a battery and a flag from the enemy, but more than a hundred and fifty prisoners—among them acting Brigadier-General Hebert, the commander of the Louisiana forces, and his Major; Col. Mitchell, of the 14th Arkansas; Col. Stone, Adjutant-General of Price's forces; and Lient. Col. John H. Price, whose life was twice spared, and who has now, for the second time, violated his parole, and was arrested with arms in his hands.

You have done your duty, and you can justly claim your share in the common glory of this victory. But let us not be partial, unjust or haughty. Let us not forget that *alone* we were too weak to perform the great work before us. Let us acknowledge the great services done by all the brave soldiers of the third and fourth divisions, and always keep in mind that "united, we stand; divided, we fall." Let us hold out and push the work through, not by mere words and great clamor, but by good marches, by hardships and fatigues, by strict discipline and effective battles.

Columbus has fallen, Memphis will follow, and if you do in future as you have done in these past days of trial, the time will soon come when you will pitch your tents on the beautiful shores of the Arkansas river, and there meet our iron-clad propellers at Little Rock and Fort Smith. Therefore keep alert, my friends, and look forward with confidence.

F. SIGEL,

Brig. Gen. Comd'g 1st and 2d Divisions.

The successful movements of the army of the South-West, and the recent great victory, had attracted public attention to the commanders. The President had nominated Curtis and Sigel to be Major-Generals of Volunteers. On the 21st of March the nominations were confirmed by the Senate of the United States. Osterhaus, Davis, Carr, Benton, Dodge and Vandever were also, about the same time, or soon after, made Brigadier-Generals of Volunteers.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF IOWA.

BY CHARLES NEGUS.

(Continued from page 92.)

BLACK HAWK.

Black Hawk was a Sac by birth, and was born at their village on Rock River, in 1767. His father's name was Pyesa, and held the office among his people of carrying the medicine bag. At the early age of fifteen, he distinguished

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